

**CITY OF MESA**  
**HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)**  
**May 21, 2014 Minutes**

The Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) of the City of Mesa met on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014,  
at 6:00pm in the Lower Level, City Council Chambers, 57 E. First Street.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Denise Heap, Chair  
Mark Tompert, Vice Chair  
Colleen Byron  
Karen Frias-Long  
Frank Johnson  
Lu Ann Schmidt

MEMBERS ABSENT

Cheryl Anderson  
Tony Liuzzo  
Cliff Moon  
Juan Panchano  
Talmage Pearce

STAFF PRESENT

Ruth Giese  
Justin Smothers  
Laura Royal  
Jodi Sorrell  
Ray Villa

GUESTS

Ron Brooks  
Maria Polletta

1. Chair's Call to Order.

Ms. Heap began the meeting at 6:00pm. Ms. Heap welcomed new member Dr. Colleen Byron to the board. Dr. Byron introduced herself to the other board members, in return the board members and staff introduced themselves to Dr. Byron.

2. Items from Citizens Present.\*

There were no citizens that requested to speak.

3. Recognition of Kim Klett from Dobson High School and Laura Royal from the Mesa Public Library for their work with the Cinema Series.

Ms. Giese introduced Ms. Royal from the Mesa Public Library. Ms. Giese advised that Ms. Royal has been working with staff to bring the Cinema Series to another venue this year at the Main Library branch. Ms. Royal has been so successful that considerations will be made over the summer to move the entire program to the Mesa Library. Ms. Royal expanded by stating that she has received very positive feedback from each viewing, which typically occurs one Saturday a month at 6pm, and welcomes the opportunity to continue screenings at the Library. Ms. Giese gave Ms. Royal a certificate of appreciation and a thank you card on behalf of the board.

Ms. Klett was not in attendance but will also be recognized with a certificate of appreciation and thank you card on behalf of the board for her work with the Cinema Series at Dobson High School.

4. Approval of minutes from the April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Tompert to approve the April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 meeting minutes, Ms. Frias- Long seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Discuss and take action on Mesa Police Department Report.

- Report on police related incidents and activities.

Mr. Villa, Community Partner Coordinator with the Mesa Police Department (MPD), advised that the recent activity of the department has been focused on the tragic death of Sgt. Mendoza. Mr. Villa informed that a special presentation will be taking place tomorrow, Thursday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014, at Guerrero Rotary Park where the Mayor, Vice Mayor, Chief of Police will be speaking, along with members of the Guerrero family, whom the park is named after, and the Mendoza family. The ball field at the park is slated to be dedicated in honor of Sgt. Mendoza given his extensive efforts and commitment to bettering the area. Ms. Heap expressed sorrow for the passing of Sgt. Brandon

Mendoza on behalf of the board. Ms. Byron also thanked MPD for the beautiful and moving candlelight vigil that was commemorated in his honor.

Ms. Schmidt noted that she has heard of recent arson in East Mesa and questioned if they were related to any hate crimes. In response, Mr. Villa stated that they have not been classified as hate crimes nor has there been any indication of such. Mr., Villa also stated that once he has more information on the particular incidents in question, he would come back to share with the board.

- Updates and scheduling of upcoming Police Advisory Board meetings.

Mr. Villa advised of three meetings that had already occurred this month: the Hispanic Advisory Board, the Asian Community Advisory Board and the Muslim Advisory Board. The Muslim Police Advisory Board is a regional board that Mesa is a part of. The meeting took place in Chandler where the topic of discussion focused on concerns from Pakistani residents in Chandler. Every year, the Muslim Advisory Board puts on a law enforcement recognition event. This year's 7<sup>th</sup> annual dinner will be taking place on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at 7pm.

The Hispanic Advisory Board had provided MPD with direction on areas of focus, which MPD has already begun working on. One suggestion is to implement a recruitment program at the high schools for minority student. Another recommendation is establishing a youth academy. MPD is working with school recourse officers to provide a two week program in the summer of 2015. Ms. Frias-Long questioned if cost for the youth program would be covered by the department or if they would be seeking donations or sponsor. In response, Mr. Villa replied that they are only at the beginning stages so cost has not been determined yet. Mr. Villa advised that he will provide updates to the board as the program develops but they are looking to program it similar to the M.E.S.A. program. Ms. Heap questioned if the M.E.S.A. program would be concluding in the upcoming year since there was some financial concerns. Mr. Villa advised that grant funding for the officer position will be concluding but he does not foresee the termination of the entire program. Mr. Villa noted that the program will be under evaluation to potentially find other funding sources; however, Mr. Villa also commented that it is unlikely that they will be able to expand that program in the near future.

The Asian Community Advisory Board took a tour of the Family Advocacy Center during their meeting and provided positive feedback. The Asian Community Advisory Board will be meeting again on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at 5:30pm at Dobson Pediatrics. Mr. Villa also informed that MPD also met with Tempe's Gay/ Straight Alliance in regards to establishing an East Valley alliance with collaborations from Mesa, Chandler and Gilbert, however those efforts were to be led by Sgt. Mendoza so a replacement is needed to continue the work. Finally, Mr. Villa advised that he was invited to join a Human Rights Committee from the Department of Economic Security (DES) that will help oversee operations in the East Valley.

6. Hear, discuss and take action regarding the Dial-a-Ride program and other accessibility services from the City of Mesa Transit Director.

Ms. Sorrell, City of Mesa Transit Director, provided an informational update from the Transportation Department. Transportation programs such as East Valley Dial-a-Ride (EVDAR) are purchased through other agencies like Valley Metro. Ms. Sorrell brought Valley Metro's new Manager of Accessible Transit Services, Ron Brooks, as a guest speaker. Mr. Brooks has been with Valley Metro for approximately seven months. Previously, Mr. Brooks was with a company that fulfills other transportation needs, and he himself is dependent on public transportation. Mr. Brooks explained that his department is responsible for making sure that the services provided by Valley Metro are accessible for people with a variety of needs or disabilities. The department overviews the Regional ADA Paratransit Eligibility, EVDAR, RideChoice and Medical Trip Card programs, ADA Platinum Pass Program, reduced fare programs and fixed-route transit training.

Some of the goals for Accessible Transit Services are: to maximize effectiveness of ADA eligibility certification process, improve effectiveness and efficiency of EVDAR operations, improve coordination and consistency of EVDAR services throughout the region, assist bus and rail operations to improve accessibility of fixed-route transit services and increase involvement and engagement of senior and disability communities. In Mesa, the EVDAR transitioned from traditional to taxi brokerage model in July 2012. In July 2013, the Mesa expanded

ADA service area to conform to city boundaries, expanded service area and hours for riders, and equalized fares for all trips at \$4 a ride.

RideChoice is a Taxi service for seniors and people with qualifying disabilities. 70% of cost paid by Mesa and 30% paid by the rider (ex: for a \$10 ride, \$7 covered by City and \$3 covered by rider). This is a service that is available 24hrs, 7 days a week, 365 days a year; however participants are limited to \$100 per month. The Platinum Pass is also available to ADA eligible persons with disabilities. This program offers free use of Valley Metro buses and rails. It also allows personal care attendants to accompany rider for free.

Mr. Brooks noted demonstrated the costs for the programs and identified several trends throughout the past three years such as the increased cost of EVDAR, decreased use of RideChoice and significant increase of Platinum Pass use. Some "hot topics" for accessibility as it pertains to transportation are: ADA regulatory issues ex. more inclusive definition of mobility device or the imminent "Reasonable Modifications" requirement, need to regionalize DAR services through consistent fares and policies and reduction of required DAR transfers, and updating the 2007 Regional ADA Paratransit Study. Mr. Brooks encouraged for the public to make their voice heard. Feedback can be provided at <http://www.valleymetro.org>, [csr@valleymetro.org](mailto:csr@valleymetro.org), or 602.253.5000. Also, look for feedback solicitation for the 2015 Regional Paratransit Study, as well as future plans for VM Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Ms. Schmidt spoke positively on the programs but stated that she has a difficult time knowing who to contact for the various services (i.e. to renew, get registration information). Ms. Schmidt suggested setting up a general number that would automatically link you to the services you requested. Ms. Schmidt also expressed difficulties and safety concerns with wait times when using multiple systems. Lastly, Ms. Schmidt questioned if there were scheduled printed in alternative formats for the fixed bus routes. In response, Mr. Brooks provided the number to his office, 602-716-2100, which is a multi-customer service line similar to what Ms. Schmidt requested, although Mr. Brooks agreed that it is a regional problem that there are four different service providers for EVDAR and therefore four different numbers to contact. This is an issue that they plan to look into in the future. Mr. Brooks also agreed that a better transfer policy needs to be developed and they will likely utilize a consultant to help develop that. Mr. Brooks also noted that he hopes to purchase an embosser with his department budget in order to print bus route schedules upon request.

Mr. Tompert thanked Ms. Sorrel for bringing Mr. Brooks and introducing him to the board. Ms. Schmidt also thanked Mr. Brooks for answering her questions. Mr. Brooks concluded by asking the board members and the community to participate in an online dialogue hosted by Easter Seals Project Action on the future of Federal Transit Administration policies and the use of technology.

7. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Ad Hoc Issues Research and Action Team.

- Provide an update on the Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Community Conversation on Discrimination.

Mr. Johnson provided an overview of all three events: 35 people participated, 19 completed surveys, of which 100% gave positive feedback and 89% said the dialogues "made me more curious about people who may be different from me". HRAB would like to thank the following volunteers for their work as facilitators and note takers at the events: Alpha Campa, Ofc. Derek Kruse, Judy Lawrence, Eliana Morrison, Patricia Naumann, Sgt. Stephanie Sherwood, Cmdr. Mike Soelberg, and Ofc. Elizabeth Trujillo. The volunteers have been provided a Certifications of Participation. The board would also like to thank Dr. Liuzzo for providing a donation for beverages, snacks and raffle prizes. In addition, the board would thank Mayor Finter, Councilmember Luna and Councilmember Kavanaugh for attending the events as well as the support from the City Council.

Ms. Heap also announced that the survey would be available online for anonymous participation from May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014 to June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014. Ms. Heap questioned why the survey would only be available for a week when the IRA committee intended for it to be available for a month. Ms. Giese stated that staff would look into extending the dates. Mr. Johnson made a motion to make the online survey available for one month in duration, Ms. Schmidt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Ms.

Heap informed the board members that staff would be sending the survey link via email so they can forward to their contacts. Ms. Heap stated that a report would be compiled over the summer with all the dialogue and survey results by third party consultant Karen Kurtz. Ms. Heap questioned if other diversity related information would also be included in the report. In response, Ms. Giese stated that Ms. Kurtz will include demographic information and statistics as well as other pertinent data but if specific information is requested to be in the report then a follow up IRA meeting is recommended.

8. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Ad Hoc Youth Diversity Education Team.

- Provide an update on assisting the Mesa Police Department M.E.S.A program.

Ms. Heap informed the board that YDET continues to work with Mr. Villa and MPD on supporting the M.E.S.A. program. Ms. Frias-Long asked if more cost information has been provided. Ms. Heap noted that they have not received the update yet.

9. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Ad Hoc Veterans Task Force.

Mr. Tompert announced that they will be concluding meetings with the external task force. The intentions of meeting with outside members were to gauge feedback for recommendations, so now that those have been received the group will no longer be meeting under this capacity. However, the group has agreed to continue meeting outside of HRAB as a veteran's advocacy group which is a benefit to the community. Mr. Tompert stated that he will recommend at the Strategic Retreat in August to appoint a member of HRAB to continue working the group in order to the connection with the City and obtain public opinion.

10. Discuss and vote on the selection of the position of Chair and Vice Chair for 2014/2015.

A motion was made by Mr. Tompert nominating Denise Heap as Chair for 2014/2015. Ms. Schmidt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. A motion was made by Ms. Schmidt nominating Mark Tompert as Vice Chair for 2014/2015. Ms. Byron seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

11. Hear and discuss conferences and/or meetings.

Ms. Giese provided the board with a summary of the Cinema Series season. Ms. Giese informed that, if approved, they will be continuing another season starting in September. Ms. Heap questioned if they plan to host the Cinema Series at both the Mesa Arts Center and Mesa Library or just one of those locations. In response, Ms. Giese stated that they want to continue the progress at the Mesa Library and will likely use that as the primary location next year. Ms. Heap also questioned if the connection with Dobson High School will continue. Ms. Giese stated that they intend to continue that relationship as well and look how they can promote it at other schools.

Mr. Smothers announced that there is a veteran and military related training on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014 hosted by the Arizona Coalition for Military Families at the Department of Health Services.

12. Scheduling of meetings, future agenda items, and general information.

- Strategic Retreat will be on Sat., August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 from 8am-12pm at 640 N. Mesa Dr.

Ms. Heap questioned staff if there were any items on the agenda yet. Ms. Giese stated that Mayor Finter has requested to speak to the board so that item will be on the agenda. Ms. Giese suggested that staff compile a draft agenda and meet with the Chair and Vice Chair to finalize it. While under the meeting facilitation of Mr. Tompert, Ms. Heap made the motion that the Chair and Vice-Chair be involved early on in preparing for the Strategic Planning Retreat. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Tompert questioned if Ms. Kurtz would be facilitating again this year. In response, Ms. Giese advised that they would have a facilitator but they have yet to confirm Ms. Kurtz for that date. Ms. Schmidt requested that the Transportation Department return in early fall with an update. Mr. Tompert stated that the Transportation representatives have committed to quarterly reports at the DAT meetings.

Ms. Schmidt also suggested that the rules of conduct and the general guidelines of the board be reviewed at the Strategic Retreat and provided in braille. Ms. Heap agreed to the need to review and supply those accommodations.

### 13. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.

Submitted By:



Ruth Giese,  
Diversity Program Administrator